

REMARKS

This application has been carefully studied and amended in view of the Office Action dated November 25, 2008. Reconsideration of that application is requested in view of the following.

The Specification has been amended to insert the heading and figure descriptions with regard to the drawings. Similarly, a heading has been added for the Detailed Description.

Parent Claims 1 and 31 have been amended to more clearly define the invention in order to advance the prosecution of this case. Independent Claim 40 has similarly been canceled to advance the prosecution of this case. Claim 1 has been amended by incorporating the subject matter of dependent Claim 4. Accordingly, Claim 4 has been canceled. Claim 31 has been amended with regard to various details of the thermal coupling. Claims 41-44 have been added to complete the claim coverage. Since there are now two claims in excess of the previous total number of claims, a supplemental fee is being paid herewith.

Parent Claim 1 relates to a practice of the invention wherein the separation is achieved through use of a dividing wall column. Parent Claim 31 relates to an alternative practice of the invention which includes the utilization of a thermal coupling for achieving the separation. Newly added Claim 41 is dependent on Claim 1 and relates to a further variation wherein after the separation of EDA and PIP in a DWC there is a subsequent separation of further components in thermally coupled distillation columns. Newly added Claims 42-44 are similar to Claims 32-34, but are dependent on newly added Claim 41. It is respectfully submitted that the addition of Claims 41-44 does not involve new matter and does not raise new issues. As is clear from parent Claims 1 and 31 utilizing a DWC or two thermally coupled columns solve the same technical problem. As a matter of interest, attached hereto is a sketch showing similarity between both variations. The addition of Claim 41 is consistent with Claims 1 and 31 in that the claimed process of Claim 41 utilizes both techniques.

It is respectfully submitted that parent Claims 1 and 31 and their dependent claims are patentable over Hara, et al. in view of Kaibel. In addition to the comments previously submitted in the Amendment of August 12, 2008, the following is noted.

The separation of EDA and PIP is an example of a separation task that is easy to solve in a conventional arrangement of two separate columns but difficult to solve in one single DWC or an arrangement of two thermally coupled columns (which is an alternative realization of the same inventive solution). This is mainly due to the physical properties of the components in the mixture at hand, e.g. the high melting point of PIP. In the conventional arrangement the operating pressures of the columns can be chosen independently, thus a possible solidification of PIP inside a column can be prevented by selecting the operating pressures accordingly. This choice of pressure is drastically restricted if the separation of EDA and PIP is to be carried out in a single column, namely a DWC. Thus, it is not at all obvious for a person skilled in the art to try a simultaneous separation of EDA and PIP in a DWC as in Claim 1 or thermally coupled columns as in Claim 31.

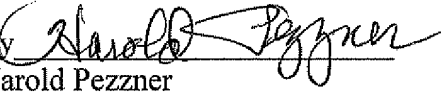
The Examiner's attention is also directed to dependent Claim 6 which adds to Claim 1 the feature of AEEA being obtained from a divided wall column. This feature is not suggested by the hypothetical combination of references. Similarly, the Examiner's attention is directed to dependent Claim 14 which defines the feed point and side draw point to differ from each other by a height of from 1 to 10 theoretical plates. This relative position has an important effect on the purity of the product obtained in the side draw.

If the Examiner has any suggestions for placing this application in better condition for allowance or in better form for appeal, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney.

If the Examiner still considers the claims to be unpatentable it is respectfully requested that this amendment be entered for purposes of appeal.

Dated:

Respectfully submitted,

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